

BACKYARD BASS ACTIVITY AT EVENTS

Objective: Teach participants how to cast safely, identify fish and learn about fishing regulations.

Staff: 1-4 people (1 person at regulation table, 1-3 people at casting line.)

Equipment:

- 1 large blue tarp & 8 tent stakes (optional) – if in a gym, can use blue painters tape to outline your casting area/"lake" 5 to 7 spincasting rods/reels with casting plugs
- 1 to 2 tables
- 15 to 20 "Backyard Bass" fish with pictures of freshwater and saltwater fish (without the names) taped to the back and numbers to represent the fish's length written in permanent marker. Vary the lengths for each species (some that meet the regulations; some under or over the regs). You can cut and tape fish images from the laminated Common Freshwater and Saltwater Fish ID cards on to the back of the backyard bass fish.
- Fish stickers or laminated Common Freshwater & Saltwater Fish ID cards to distribute to the participants
- Outdoor Annual
- An enlarged copy of the saltwater and freshwater regulation charts showing length and bag limits from the Outdoor Annual. You can laminate these or use plastic sheet protectors or clear contact paper or use a large inexpensive plexiglass poster frame.
- Tape
- Caution tape and stakes to create the casting zone and keep folks from walking through it.
- Fish ruler (optional)
- Rod holder (optional)



Directions for Set-Up

1. Position and stake down the blue tarp. Look for potential hazards (fire ant beds, nearby trees)
2. Place and scatter the plastic fish on the tarp so that the mouths are facing the casting line.
3. Place caution tape or flagging around the casting area for safety.
4. Place the table(s) about 10-15 feet behind the casting line.
5. Tape one each of the saltwater and freshwater Fish ID cards and the regulation charts to the ID table so that participants can read the length limits and daily bag limits. (Optional – use a fish ruler on the table to show the young kids how big their fish is!)
6. Decide where the waiting line will be and how you will manage the kids to avoid someone being hit.
7. Test each of the rods/reels, practice casting and catching fish a few times so that you can better help the kids.

Directions for Catching the Backyard Bass

1. Allow only 2 - 4 kids to cast at a time (depends on # of helpers and size of casting area.)
2. Explain to each participant how to safely cast the line (look behind themselves before casting to make sure there are no obstructions/trees, people or pets.)
3. Show participants how the spin casting rod/reel works. Before the initial cast, let them push the button to release the line and casting plug, and then retrieve the line.
4. Explain that since we have a short cast and a lot of people around, we are going to do a small overhand cast. Demonstrate the cast emphasizing that you don't have to put a lot of effort into the cast to make it go far enough to catch our Backyard Bass. Show them how to guide the casting plug into the pocket of the plastic fish. (Pointing the rod tip down will aid in guiding the plug where you want it to go.)
5. After they catch a fish (do not tell them the name of the fish!), take the rod from them and give them the fish and direct them to the ID table to identify what type of fish they caught and determine if it's legal to keep.
6. At the ID table, have kids match the picture of the fish on the plastic fish to the fish ID card to learn the fish name, then use the regs chart to determine whether or not the fish is of legal size. Give each kid a sticker and/or a fish ID card. If they want allow them to get back in line to cast again.

